Sept. 28, 1986

Dear Schloss family,

I am returning your questionnaire on topless use of parks, etc. I live in the Ithaca area and have been using the Six Mile Creek section for eleven years. There are five specific areas used in the past by groups of people for nude sunbathing or swimming. They are as follows:

(1) Upper Reservoir
(2) Potter's Falls
(3) the Island
(4) the Rock, just above the Lower Reservoir's 30 foot dam
(5) area below the Van Natta's Dam.

It is strictly forbidden to be at no. 1 at all, and persons are arrested for trespassing even if they are fully clothed. Still some brave persons use the area, only a few. The best area, nearly like the Garden of Eden to many of us, is Potter's Falls. Here on sunny summer weekend, you may find as many as 40 people. All but a very few are totally nude, men and women. One then moves along the stream bed to the Lower Reservoir and finds the island at one end. I'd say it has as many 5-10 persons, of both sexes, again usually totally nude. The Rock at the other end of the Lower Reservoir is very popular and is genuinely clothes optional,i.e., persons feel totally free to wear or not wear what they want. The mood for the day is often established by those first there. So sometimes it is almost all nude or sometimes almost all clothed, including tops for women. A lot of times it is just plain mixed. Usually women along the whole area either go traditional and wear tops and bottoms or nothing at all. Women generally do not go topless as a separate option although some do. It is not the custom per se. In the area below Van Natta's Dam, which can be seen from the road, as one walks or drives past, persons. On weekends, families take over and there is no nudity of any kind, but on weekdays right after work around 5-6:30 PM, young singles are often there in small groups and many are fully naked swimming or sunning themselves. Police will bust here also because it is so near the road but busts are very rare.

I want to emphasize that the City does not care about nudity per se. I have been talking with the ranger, a woman, on several occasions with nothing on at all and having a pleasant conversation. She did of course try to prevent swimmng since that is forbidden. There was an accident in which a high senior drowned on the last day of school near the Rock. So the city for reasons of tort liablity decided to institue a ranger system to show it was trying to do its best to prevent such accidents. I specifically raised the issue of nudity before city council just after the event and with regard to the new nudity law passed by the state. I asked that the Potter's Falls area be officially designated "clothes optional" and considered not to be public inthe sense that the anti-nudity law contemplated. One member of the council, an attorney, amended the charge to the committee studying the area to strongly consider such a proposal. There were no objections from other council members Subsequently, no action was taken, but again no enforcement of anti-nudity has been taken. Areas 2,3, and 4 are inside the watershed area and shielded from general public view. Area 5 is open to public view.

The area is very clean, maintained by the users. It is also very orderly, everyone trying to live and let live in separate areas. The only untoward event I have heard of in years was just this year. A single male, i.e., with no friends around, went swimming in the area near the Rock. Teenagers stole all his clothes except his jogging shoes. He had to walk home in broad daylight naked for several blocks. Just a kids' prank. Persons are generally fully dressed between these major areas since young famil also walk along the trails. This makes for a nice modus vivendi.

Sincerely,

Alan Diefenbach